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910 Ponce de Leon Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30306-4212, 404-874-9652, www.opendoorcommunity.org

April 2004

Building Community, Part II

Life Together: Formation for Discipleship

By Murphy Davis

(Editor's note: In November 2003, Murphy Davis and Ed Loring traveled to Amsterdam, the Netherlands, for the annual meeting of the European Catholic Worker Communities. Murphy gave the keynote address for the meeting. This is Part II of an adaptation of her talk; Part III will be printed in May's Hospitality.)

The scriptures teach us that "without a vision the people perish." And we might add that without a common vision, communities perish. To even begin to form a life together, a vision must be shared at some level. If a community is to survive for any time at all, the vision must be strong enough to sustain us. And we must remember the vision every step of the way.

Many people articulate wanting community—in congregations, in neighborhoods, in different forms of intentional community; but when it comes down to it, we learn that we have to be willing to do the tedious work of building community, striving for it, praying for it, sweating for it, hoping for it (often against all evidence of its being a possibility). W.H. Auden said, "To choose what is difficult all one's days as if it were easy, that is faith." No question about it, there is no such thing as building community without a vision or without faith, or without plenty of blood, sweat, and tears.

Several years ago, I met a man named Ron Podlaski. Ron is a Vietnam veteran, a member of the Green Berets, who decided after the war to live in Cambodia and spend his life working with the victims of American landmines among the Khmer people. It was a work of healing and restoration as he fit people with prostheses to replace arms and legs that had been blown away by what he called these "eternal sentinels."

"Cambodia will be de-mined," said Ron, "but it will be one leg, one arm, one life at a time for the Khmer people."

Ron tells the story of a village where people were hungry and poor. The offer was made to the village to stock a fishpond for the people if only they would themselves dig the pond. But there were so many sick and disabled people it seemed like an impossible task.

Until finally the women and men with no legs led the blind who pushed their wheelchairs. And

together they dug the pond. And they put fish in it. And they had protein in their diet; and they ate. And everybody got better; and their life together got better.

What a wonderful image of community. We all have a reason that we cannot do what needs to be done. We all have our limitations and our broken places. But where you are weak, the next person might be strong. Where he cannot see, perhaps she can lead, and he will walk with the legs she does not have. Where your sister/brother cannot see the way ahead, you might hold the light to illumine the path.

We know better than to offer our feeble excuses. The time to build **Community, cont'd on page 8**



RITA CORBIN

A Lenten Reflection

By Diana George

In my life outside The Open Door, I am a Professor of Humanities at Michigan Technological University in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. It is a place with long winters, deep snowfall, and close friendships. So, while I am here in Atlanta, I have been sending reports back to my home parish, St. Anne's Catholic Church in Chassell, Michigan. The people at St. Anne's have responded with warmth and generosity. Even people I didn't know or barely knew have written to me about the work at The Open Door. When Obie Anglen, a friend from the yard, died in February, I sent this Lenten Report. I share it now with Hospitality readers because we are, all of us, a small circle of friends.

Dear Father Larry and St. Anne's Parishioners,

On the Monday before Ash Wednesday, we began the morning reflection with a reading from Matthew that most of us have heard every year at the beginning of Lent:

"But take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them . . . when you give alms, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do . . . to win the praise of others. . . . When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. . . . When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance, so that they may appear to others to be fasting. . . . When you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you may not appear to be fasting, except to God who sees what is hidden and will repay you."

That reading struck me as especially powerful this morning because I believe it helps me explain why I've been so silent since before Christmas. I haven't written much since then because there are times when I'm not sure what the letters are really all about. Doesn't Jesus tell us to pray privately, fast privately, give privately?

Lent, continued on page 9

Crime and Punishment

By Elizabeth Dede

One story from a friend's son-in-law has got me thinking about crime and punishment. Tony was still a boy of 16 when he got into some trouble. He was charged with burglary and spent two years locked up. When he was released he still had several years to serve on parole.

While Tony was in prison he was a model of good behavior, and after his release, he served his parole well and completed it successfully. Tony learned from his mistakes and grew up to be a responsible adult and parent.

Two years ago, Tony decided on a career. He went to school to learn how to drive semi trucks. He passed the course with high grades and was ready to get a job as a cross-country truck driver. His interviews for jobs went well, and he was offered several positions. However, after the interviews, a criminal background check was always run on Tony. The job offers were withdrawn. A mistake that Tony made in his youth comes back to haunt him continually.

Since he made several applications with trucking firms and always lost the job possibility as soon as the background check was run, Tony set his sights more locally and applied for a job with Tysons. The same thing happened to him there: he passed the interview process, but when the criminal background check was run, he was not offered a job.

What hope is there for Tony? He is a good man who made a mistake as a child. He paid dearly for that mistake, giving up two years of his youth to prison and living through the strictures of many years of parole. Was that not punishment enough? Why is Tony unable to live as a responsible adult now that he has paid for his crime?

I believe that when Tony successfully completed his parole, the record of his crime should have been expunged. He was already punished. Tony needs to be allowed to be a responsible member of society, working to sup-

port his family, paying taxes, and spending his time well as a working adult.

Tony was not given a life sentence because the punishment should fit the crime. However, with burgeoning prison sentencing, our system is creating a permanent underclass of young men who do their time, yet continue to be punished once they are no longer under the sentence of the system. Tony has been punished enough. Clear his record and allow him to work. Set Tony free. ✦

Elizabeth Dede is a Partner at the Open Door Community.

Recommended Reading



Addicted to War: Why the U.S. Can't Kick Militarism.

An illustrated expose by Joel Andreas. 69 pp. AK Press, 2003.

Order from AK Press at www.akpress.org

Addicted to War is a witty and devastating portrait of U.S. military policy, a fine example of art serving society.

-Howard Zinn, Author,
A People's History of the United States

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HOSPITALITY

Hospitality is published 11 times a year by the Open Door Community (PCUS), Inc., an Atlanta community of Christians called to ministry with the homeless poor and with prisoners, particularly those on death row. Subscriptions are free. A newspaper request form is included in each issue. Manuscripts and letters are welcomed. Inclusive language editing is standard. For more information about the life and work of the Open Door Community, please contact any of the following:

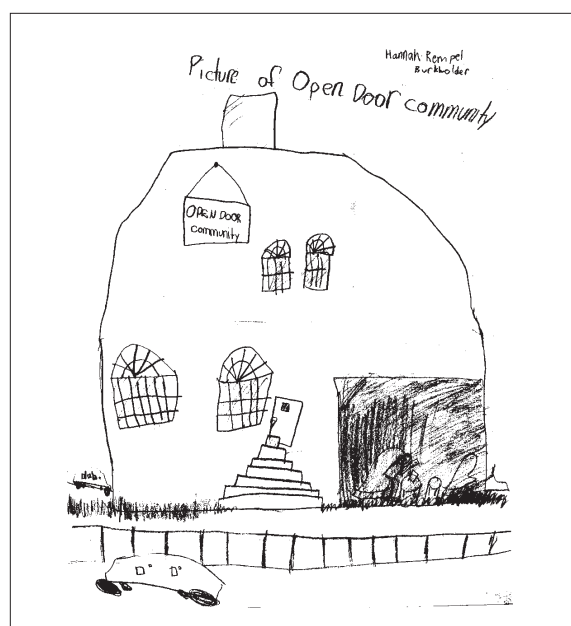
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HANNAH REMPEL BURKHOLDER

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The Circus and the Wilderness

By Lauren Cogswell

It is Easter and we are emerging from the Lenten wilderness journey, ready to sing with Alleluias of the triumph of life over death! Christ is Risen! Alleluia! Alleluia! Death has lost its sting! Our wilderness journey has been a time of preparation, a time of reformation into the people that God has created us to be. After Jesus was baptized by the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit drove him into the wilderness for 40 days. In the desert wilderness Jesus was tempted to be other people than the Prince of Shalom, the non-violent Anointed One that he was called to be. The wilderness is a place of formation. In the wilderness we find clarity, for there is nowhere to hide in the desert. In the wilderness, we have to come face to face with who we are and where we look for life.

There was a time when the circus was a part of that wilderness journey. Like the Israelites wandering through the desert, the circus would pitch its tents in the wilderness outside of the city walls and invite the city dwellers into a world of parody and eschatological envisioning. These circus performers, sojourners, lived by different rules; they defied the powers of death in their high flying acrobatics and celebrated the diversity of the creatures of the earth. William Stringfellow, street lawyer, theologian, activist, and prophet, loved this circus. He spent a summer traveling with them as a circus theologian and regarded the circus as liturgy, as "an image of the eschatological realm."¹

In February, the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus came to Atlanta and I bought tickets and sauntered off to enjoy what they call "The Greatest Show on Earth." But as the show began, I realized that this circus was no longer a journey into the margins, into the tents of sojourners who somersaulted a vision of victory over death. In a different time I can imagine Stringfellow's circus, of this parade being a brilliant parody, an eschatological vision of these wayfaring strangers who proclaim transcendence over death. But today's circus goes on in the heart of the empire. The little group of tent dwellers has been bought by corporate America, by the powers of wealth and capitalism. The bigtop has been replaced by the national arena. A pit began to grow in my stomach when I recognized the wilderness of empire that I found myself in. This was no circus; this was a war parade.

Walking into Phillips Arena we were surrounded by throngs of people, bright lights, televisions, booths selling dizzying light wands and spinning light toys, all washed down with sweet Coca-Cola. The arena was dark except for spinning lights and the spotlights on the three rings, wherever they wanted to draw our attention. I found the environment to be numbing and distracting. I was unable to keep up with the action going on in all three rings and dizzyed by the whirling lights around me. Spectacle, sensation, sugar, all seemed like ways to distract us from the war education we were about to receive. With all this going on, how could we notice our neighbor on the sidewalk as we left, asking for his share of daily bread?

My friends and I were sitting in the next to last row, way up in the tiptop of the arena, like birds perched on a wire. It seemed to be a bit of grace to sit in the back as silent observers to the event that was happening below. The ringmaster warmed up the crowd, "Ladies and Gentleman, Children of all Ages, Welcome to the Greatest Show on Earth..." The crowd clapped when he encouraged them to clap, yelled when he asked them to yell. They were in the palm of his hand. Then the parade began. A scantily clad woman in sequins came into the arena on the back of an elephant, carrying an American flag. The crowd stood up for the singing of the national anthem. And I wondered, what does the circus have to do with our nation? I didn't come to the circus to participate in the government, to be patriotic or to participate in our national agenda. As the circus unfolded I began to see in the darkness that this circus indeed had *everything* to do with our nation's agenda.

First came a parade of animals from around the world: zebras and elephants from the plains of Africa, single and double humped camels from the Middle East, and tigers from Asia. Instead of a majestic parade, I felt ashamed to be looking on this assembly line of merchandise. The elephants came out holding onto each others' tails with their trunks with their heads slung low: embarrassment. Two of the camels rebelled at the parade, they would not be owned. They pulled at their ropes, they were angry; they backed away from the ring. Quickly they were rushed into the darkness out of sight. My heart rose from the pit of my stomach: Freedom! Resist! Run camels run!

Quickly the rings were filled with jumping dogs, clowning dogs, dogs jumping through hoops, dogs walking on their hind legs like humans. I laughed. I liked the dogs and admired their good training. The horses came in dancing and turning in graceful circles, playing their role as the clowns made us laugh. They too walked on their hind legs. The ringleader's whip snapped back and forth. The crack of the whip made me cringe. My vision shifted. The horses stopped looking like horses and started looking like clowns, humiliated. Humiliation is a work of war. The audience cheered.

Elephants, zebras, and tigers paraded into the ring. They all had their trials to perform. They were part of comedy routines with the clowns; the audience laughed. We had been warmed up by the dogs and the horses (domesticated animals) so we might be comfortable and prepared for the acts that followed. The works of war were already doing their work. The elephants and the tigers were made to walk on their hind legs like humans; one tiger even hopped like a bunny. They were being humiliated for our entertainment. When the elephants came out, they were surrounded by a group of women in halter-tops and

skintight pants. Domination. Humiliation and Domination are works of war. The audience cheered.

I have seen these magnificent animals, zebras and elephants in their homeland, on the plains of southern Africa. They are awe-inspiring, majestic, powerful creatures of God. As I watched them stride across the fields, I prayed, giving thanks to God for the beauty and majesty of Creation. Their wild beauty brought forth faith in my heart of the goodness of our Creator. Now I was watching them again, enslaved and humiliated. I wanted to fall on my knees in repentance, praying for forgiveness for human desire for domination that is denying them the fullness of their life.

The high-flying trapeze artists swooped across the arena and the tension rose. The ringmaster built up the crowd; "You will witness death-defying leaps...life-risking...never attempted before!" The acrobats flew and flipped, defying death. The audience cheered. The tension continued to rise as the "Globe of Death" rolled onto the floor. The arena grew dark, the band piped out mysterious music. The "Globe of Death" was a metal sphere in which five Hispanic men rode motorcycles around and around. The thrill of tempting death was palpable. Fear... Thrill... Fear... Thrill... Oh the love of violence, the fear of death.

Into the dark arena, a huge cannon was wheeled. The ring master began his battle cry, "Ladies and Gentlemen, hold onto your seats, no man, woman or child has ever witnessed anything like this death-defying..." BOOM! A man all ablaze shot across the arena, landed on an air mattress and triumphantly stood up. His body was wrapped in flames. He

Circus, continued on page 9

Spring Appeal 2004

Dear Friends,

The peace of the Risen Christ be with you.

As we welcome spring and the promise of new life, we thank God for the ways you sustain us: through friendship, prayers, and gifts of time, resources, and money.

You continually refresh and strengthen us on this journey for justice, and we are ever grateful.

Please continue your generous and life-giving support.

With love and thanks,

The Open Door
Community



A Man of Peace, at Age 73, Pays Ridiculous Price

By Will D. Campbell

(Editor's note: This essay was published in The Tennessean [Nashville, TN] on February 9, 2004. Will D. Campbell is a farmer, writer and Baptist minister of the South. He is the author of more than a dozen books and he lives in Mt. Juliet. Will is the founder of Southern Prison Ministry, which continues through the Open Door Community.)

When a nation becomes so insecure that it sends elderly and ill citizens to prison for taking a few steps on native ground, that nation is in danger of losing its soul. Or so it seems to me.

I am referring to an aging prophet named Don Beisswenger, 73, a Nashvillian who has been sentenced to half a year in federal prison and fined a thousand dollars for taking six steps past a *No Trespassing* sign at Fort Benning, GA.

I could call the Rev. Beisswenger good and righteous, and all those adjectives apply. But a better designation is the strong noun, prophet: one who teaches and lives by biblical authority. However we describe him, he is a man of faith and good deeds.

I have known Don Beisswenger for 40 years. This modest and unassuming man has demonstrated through his teaching in the Divinity School at Vanderbilt University, his ministry to the homeless in Nashville and Atlanta and Chicago, his realized vision for the highly respected Peniel Ridge Retreat Center, and his devotion to his wife and life partner, Joyce, so recently departed, that he is a virtuous human being.

But he took six harmless steps over an arbitrary line to bear witness against the teachings of the School of the Americas/West Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (SOA/WHISC) at Fort Benning, GA, and for that, he was arrested, charged, tried, convicted and sentenced in a federal court in Columbus, GA.

There will be no appeal. His sentence will be served at a designated federal penal institution, beginning in April. Beisswenger describes himself as a "post-Holocaust Christian" who believes that "Christian nations can too easily ignore brutality and atrocities done in their name." The reverend told the court that graduates of the SOA/WHISC have actively participated in some of the worst human rights abuses on record in Central and South America. Citing such respected sources as Amnesty International as well as his own serious and prolonged study of the military school and the affected countries, he gave proof that the infamous rape and murder of four missionaries in El Salvador, and the murder of Archbishop Romero there, were committed by men who got their training in counter-terrorism assault tactics at the SOA.

You might argue that Beisswenger could have made his point in some fashion other than trespassing outside the place where American military personnel train foreign nationals to conduct "insurgency warfare" against dissidents in their home countries.

But how? In the present atmosphere of hysteria about terrorism, homeland security, and other phobias, our government has so insulated and isolated itself from the people and imperiled their basic rights

that direct confrontation is the only effective way to make a clear statement of conscience.

And for exercising that right, a right we had assumed was protected by the Constitution and Bill of Rights, Don Beisswenger, an old man in poor health who is certainly no threat to national security, is going to prison. They'll give him a number in place of his name, and he'll sit behind bars for six months.

Brooding about this travesty, I find myself recalling World War II and the number I wore for three years. I was 18 when I got my dog tag with my serial number on it.

As an ordained Baptist preacher, I was exempt from the draft, but I volunteered to serve and spent three years as an infantryman. I learned to shoot guns and to cut and sew on injured soldiers when there weren't enough doctors and nurses. I didn't know it at the time, but one of the big bombers I saw touch down on a little patch of rock in the South Pacific was the Enola Gay, just returning from its history-changing mission over Hiroshima.

Bad as that time was, we're in a worse one now. This old world is reeling and rocking. We've been lied to and driven into a war of aggression by the leaders of our own government, who justify their actions with slogans:

"Destroy their weapons of mass destruction."
Not ours, but theirs.

"Destroy the regime of this vicious dictator."
Not just any dictator but this particular one.

"Rally the coalition of freedom-loving nations."
Meaning us and a few more, against the warning of all the others working through the United Nations.

Young men and women with serial numbers just like mine are doing the bloody deeds their commander-in-chief sent them to do, at risk of their lives (more than 500 dead so far) and the lives of the invaded, evil and innocent alike (tens of thousands of them). Such a waste!

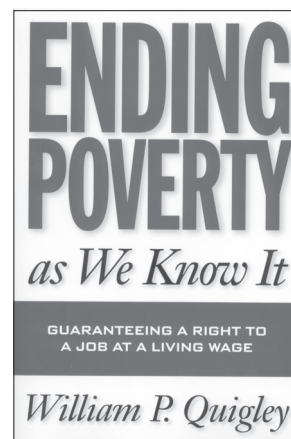
How in the name of God can this be justified?
And now Don Beisswenger is going to get his

number and enter a prison here in the waning years of his exemplary Christian life.

GREAT GOD! What are we doing? †

Don Beisswenger's sentencing statment appeared in the March issue of Hospitality. He will report to Manchester, KY, to begin his prison sentence on April 6.

Recommended Reading



Ending Poverty as We Know It.

By William P. Quigley.
245 pp. Philadelphia, 2003.
Temple University Press.

William Quigley blows the lid off the smug insistence that the Protestant work ethic will solve the poverty problem. Simply put, the poor work. They are poor not because

they do not work, but because their wages are inadequate. This effectively turns the entire causal logic on its head. Work is not the solution; it is the problem...[Quigley] is a professor's radical: elegant in his theorizing, careful in his analysis, and breathtaking in his vision.

-Monica Gaughan,
Professor of Public Policy,
Georgia Tech University
From "Working their Way Down,"
February 2004 *Hospitality*

On Thony Green's (102340) Rejection for Parole

By Ed Loring

Our train stopped with a jolt on a side track. We waited without a word. We were afraid to ask, for the answer might shift the world in which we seek to have our say before the long and final silence which keeps tapping on our shoulders. Finally an anonymous voice blurted over the sound system that we were returning to LaPlace because the bridge was out in Baton Rouge. It would take another few hours to clear the tracks behind us.

United States of America helicopters, black like buzzards, keep coiling around and swooping toward our train cars. The noise hit our hearts like the sudden squeeze of a Heimlich maneuver when we are choking on a glob of dry bread hung up like a child's kite on an electric line. Ear stuffed with the terrible news of the war.

After long and painful labor pains among the guts of the unemployed, our train moved backwards, again, over the bayous and alligator-infested black waters. Outside the LaPlace jail stands a statue of John the Baptist. We cannot hear what he is saying. †

Ed Loring is a Partner at the Open Door Community.

Waiting for the Health Care Revolution

By **Chuck Harris**

I have a friend in Michigan who had to put a lien on his house before the private, for-profit hospital would perform necessary surgery. He's unable to work, but because his condition isn't the result of a work-related injury, he doesn't qualify for workman's compensation. He can't work, but since he wasn't laid off, he can't get unemployment benefits. He could lose his home to pay for necessary medical care.

Here in Atlanta we have a public hospital. Though burdened with debt, Grady continues to provide health care to the poor and the uninsured. Recently, to cut escalating costs, that care was limited to residents of Fulton and DeKalb counties which are chartered to fund the hospital.

Here at The Open Door, we have personal reasons for keeping Grady Hospital healthy. Grady saw Murphy Davis through recovery from two bouts of Burkitt's Lymphoma. Grady doesn't ask our out-of-work friends on the street to put liens on houses they don't have and it doesn't turn them away. Grady is important to us. So, keeping Grady open and its services available to the poor is a part of the activist life of this community. We pray, we picket, we leaflet, and during Holy Week we worship at Grady's front door (or, as close to the front door as security guards allow).

And yet, though Grady's services allow Atlanta to claim that health care is available to everyone, that care is not received without struggle.

Willie Carter, a resident here in the house, has been trying for two months to get an appointment for the oral surgery doctors tell him he must have to stop the skull-splitting headaches and the infection that rages in his body while he waits just to get an appointment. Over two months ago, he was promised an appointment in six weeks. That still hasn't happened.

Willie's case is not unusual, and once he does get his appointment, the road is still a rough one. Advice for anyone headed off to a Grady appointment is to take a lunch and a good book.

A few weeks ago, I sat with Rocky during part of his appointment to pick up diabetes medication at Grady pharmacy. Grady outpatient pharmacy is open 24 hours a day, every day. To get their medication, patients need to make an appointment, and then they show up and wait. They wait

to go to a window to turn in their paperwork. Then, they wait to be called to another window to go over the medication with a pharmacist or technician. Often, the waiting has people so frustrated they don't ask questions or get a clear understanding of the medication they will be taking.

And the pharmacist or technician isn't the end of the line. There is one final line to wait in. That's the one for the actual medication itself. Through the entire wait, the patient just hopes that this prescription is free or comes with an affordable co-payment.

The pharmacy waiting area is almost always crowded—often there's a line that goes into the hall. An auditorium across the hall was opened for additional waiting space with televisions to help pass the time.

While Rocky and I were waiting, all four television sets were on, but their pictures were so badly distorted, it was too irritating to watch. We stayed in the main waiting area, hoping for signs of progress on the other side of the Plexiglas. Now and again a name was called.

A young woman with her arm in a sling and in obvious pain got to the window and took some of her medicine immediately. An older woman salvaged some dignity for all of us by raising a little hell at the window. She got plenty of encouragement from those of us in the chairs, and if she'd chosen to, could have led us in a skirmish toward the health care revolution.

Ten or so years ago, Hillary Clinton tried to legislate some sort of national health insurance. Sadly, husband Bill and Congress were cowed by health care profiteers and the no-more-taxes crowd. Since then, things have gotten worse. Costs are higher, and more and more public hospitals are closing, more and more programs are being cut, and Medicaid and Medicare are increasingly under-funded.

In the suburbs of north Fulton County, there's a movement to form a new county. This is driven partly by a desire to avoid paying taxes to support Grady and the poor of Atlanta.

As Catholic Workers, we ascribe to what Peter Maurin called "personalism"—that Christians have an obligation to take personal responsibility for the well-being of others. Maurin wrote, "The Sermon on the Mount will become practical when Christians make up their minds to practice it."

While I maintain hope in that vision, it is clear this country needs a political will to regulate health care costs and provide dignified care to everyone. It is also clear that Maurin's vision reaches beyond church and into political will. It is not only Christians, not only church folk who must take personal responsibility for the well being of others. It is this country, this democracy, this world. Health care is a basic human right for which every government has responsibility. ✠

Chuck Harris is a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door Community.

poetry corner



JULIE LONNEMAN

Send us your poetry!
We especially welcome poetry
from people in prison and on the streets. Send it to:

Mark M. Bashor, The Poetry Corner
The Open Door Community
910 Ponce de Leon Ave NE
Atlanta, GA 30306-4212

The Shouts of Silence

By **Don Reed**

Ssssh,
Can you hear it?
Can you hear their voices?
Can you hear their cries?
Can you hear the shouts of their silence?

You don't need ears to hear
Just use your eyes to see
Look past the surface
Look deep,
Deep into their eyes,
Only then can you hear
their wounded souls' cry

Ssssh,
Tell me, can you hear it?
The sounds of the city
Can so easily distract you
And stifle their cries
Cold rain, the fury of the wind
Only add to their pain.

Ssssh,
Tell me,
Am I the only one
Who hears their shouts
Of Silence?

If you have the heart to feel
If you have the spirit to heal
Then we can bring a voice
To their shouts
Of silence. ✠

Don Reed, a friend of the Open Door Community, is homeless in Atlanta.



JULIE LONNEMAN

This Memorial Day, the Open Door Community needs help to provide a festive holiday picnic for 500 hungry friends:

watermelons
ground beef for hamburgers
potato chips
baked beans
ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise

For information about donations, call 404-874-9652

In, Out, and Around 910

compiled by Murphy Davis

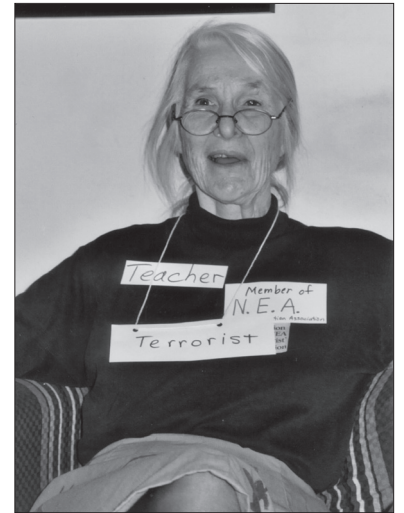


ANNA CLARK

We're celebrating the arrival of two textbooks by Resident Volunteer Diana George and co-authors--hot off the press! Pearson Longman has published *Reading Culture: Contexts for Critical Reading and Writing* in its fifth edition (and it includes an article from *Hospitality*!). *Picturing Texts* is in its first edition from Norton Publishing. Diana describes it as a text that brings visual images into the reading and writing process. Both are used widely as college textbooks. Diana is on a year's sabbatical from her teaching at Michigan Technical University.



DIANA GEORGE



DIANA GEORGE

It was a joy to see Eric McSpadden and his fiancée, Deedee, when they came down from Chattanooga for a quick visit. Eric lived at the Open Door in 1996, and came to see us and give us an update on his life and work.



DIANA GEORGE



DIANA GEORGE



DIANA GEORGE

Mardi Gras is a grand occasion to raid the clothes closet for all the glitter and intrigue that's to be found. Lewis Sinclair prepared his famous seafood gumbo and it was a wonderful party. From left clockwise: Anthony Eunice came dressed as "Columbo," Gladys Rustay came as a teacher-terrorist from the National Education Association (we can explain it if you happened to miss the news about the Bush Education Secretary labeling the NEA as a terrorist organization!), Chuck Harris and Mary Sinclair can hardly contain their sparkle, and Lena Mandeville came to enjoy the cake with her friend Amy Vosburg.



We joined in the annual Martin Luther King Day march in downtown Atlanta to cry out for Dr. King's vision of the Beloved Community: housing and justice for all people, the abolition of the death penalty, and an end to our harsh use of prisons and jails. (left) Judy Stapleton and Anne Sayre; (below) Robert Howard, Don Reed, Rocky Brady, and Tony Sinkfield.



In observance of the Feast of the Holy Innocents, Mike Casey was arrested along with five others for crossing the line at the Offutt Air Force Base (Stratcom) in Omaha, Nebraska. The line crossers were released by the police within two hours and issued letters banning them from the base for one year. Stratcom is the nerve center which controls all the nuclear weaponry in the United States arsenal.



DIANA GEORGE



DIANA GEORGE



DIANA GEORGE



DIANA GEORGE

The community joined FLOC (Farm Labor Organizing Committee) for a picket and rally in front of our neighborhood Kroger store. We urge the store to take Mt. Olive pickles off their shelves and to promote the boycott because of deadly working conditions for the farm workers who grow the cucumbers for Mt. Olive. (On the upper left) Mike Casey, Rocky Brady, and Anthony Eunice hold the signs high; (upper right) Heather Barger and Lauren Cogswell lead the march down Ponce to the store; (lower right) Willie Carter and Aaron Jacobson (lower left, FLOC organizer) take turns with the bullhorn to urge life and dignity for farm workers.



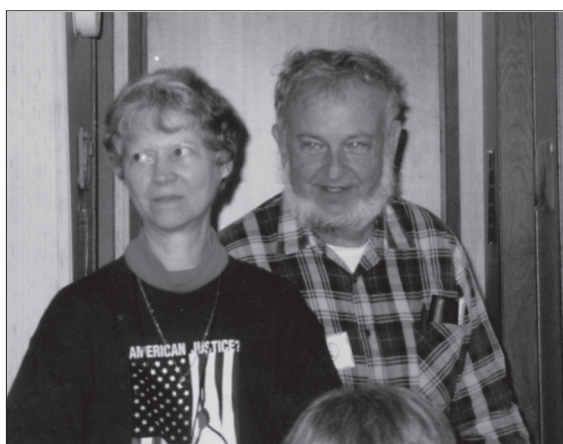
We are happy to announce—right here on the society page of Hospitality—the engagement of former Resident Volunteer Mike Casey to Amy Vosburg. Amy is a staff attorney for the Georgia Justice Project and a leader of our Monday morning breakfast. The Casey and Vosburg families (pictured here) gathered from Nebraska, California and Pennsylvania for the celebration of the grand event at the Open Door. A good time was had by all, and an October wedding is planned.



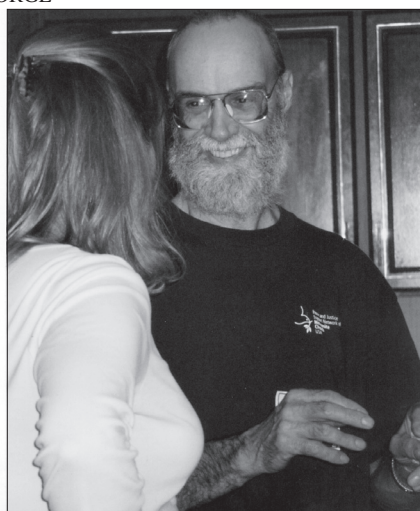
DIANA GEORGE



DIANA GEORGE



DIANA GEORGE



DIANA GEORGE

On a beautiful spring day in February, we joined with many other friends of New Hope House to celebrate the 15th anniversary of their hospitality and accompaniment of the families of prisoners on death row. Mary Ruth and Ed Weir (lower left) founded the work after a number of years of living at Koinonia and then Jubilee Partners. Also pictured are (upper right) Chuck Harris, Courtenay Siceloff, and Anthony Eunice, (upper left) Steve Caldwell, and (lower right) Lauren Cogswell and Al Lawler.

Community, continued from page 1

communities of hospitality and resistance is always now. The Beloved Community *is* among you, and we are called and privileged to be co-creators in building a new world in the shell of the old.

Jesus said that in following in the way of discipleship, “You shall have life, and have it to the full.” The abundant life is promised for those who make community with others on the journey of love. Dorothy Day always quoted Dostoevsky from *The Brothers Karamazov*: “Love in action is a harsh and dreadful thing compared to love in dreams.” That is why a primary discipline for building community is courage. Our *dreams* of community and love do not sustain us. For most of us, it doesn’t take long at all to run up against our own limitations when it comes to love. We dream of being so good and patient and giving. But day-to-day life together can cure our illusions in a hurry. When the dreams and illusions crash, we are ready to cut our losses and head for the hills. We are ready to blame others and make every excuse in the book. The only way to go on is to find the courage to face ourselves, seek forgiveness, and start again.

This is why Dietrich Bonhoeffer says that community can begin only *after* our dreams of community die. But this is hard news. It is not the pretty picture we had in mind, and courage is a key issue in considering whether or not to go on. We do not maintain courage alone.

When our illusions die, we can learn that in a very real sense, authentic community is really not “built” at all. It has little or nothing to do with our magnanimous hearts, our long-suffering nature, or the astounding depth of our commitment.

Deep authentic community has to do with offering our limited selves to God and praying for the wisdom and willingness to let God’s Spirit form us for Life Together. Though we are the ones who must show willingness to start out on the journey, after a certain point, we have to let go of our plans and allow ourselves to be led and “built into” community.

Sometimes we think that if we had known exactly what all of that was going to mean, we might not have started out on the journey. It is, after all, painful and hard to learn that we are not as good, as loving, as patient as our images of ourselves.

Prayer, solitude, patience, meditation, humility, forgiveness, gratitude: these become the essential disciplines if we are to stay on the journey.

Thomas Merton says that to grow in the spiritual life we must be willing always to be beginners. The same is true for building community. The longer we work on it, the more clear it becomes that we do not know much about what we are doing and we must begin again and again and again. Frankly, this can get pretty old. Sometimes we wonder: will we ever get to something approximating stability? Will we ever be able to rest from the precarity of our lives? [Precarity, by the way, is—as far as I can tell—a word that Dorothy Day invented. But it’s a good one.] We would like for all of this to be a bit more tidy, but it’s not. We are always beginners. Life abundant is about dying and being re-born: death and Resurrection.

Our 24 years of living with alcoholics and drug addicts has been a tremendous resource for us in understanding the importance of “living one day at a time.” It seems to me a good way of thinking about what it means to “enter by the narrow gate.” The road to destruction sure *is* wide and easy, and always the most likely choice. But whether our struggle is to stay clean and sober or, more generally, to live a life of maturity and integrity, the practice must be

exercised every day: the cross has to be picked up every day. Clarence Jordan’s translation about the narrow gate is, “Approach life through the gate of discipline. For the way that leads to emptiness is wide and easy, and a lot of folks are taking that approach. But the gate into the full life is hard, and the road is bumpy, and only a few take this route” (Matthew 7: 13-14).

Our life together must be a journey toward integrity and the growing maturity of each member. In other words, we need to expect each other to engage the ongoing struggle to *be* who we say we are. This demands ongoing personal transformation, and it must be expected of each one if a community is to be truly alive.

Facing our own deep shadows, brokenness, weakness, vulnerability and fear is demanding and painful, and we need the comfort and encouragement of others to maintain our courage and discipline. The struggle is practically inevitable if we are trying every day to become more loving: to pour out our lives for others; to work on getting the log out of our own eye before we worry about the speck in our neighbor’s eye.

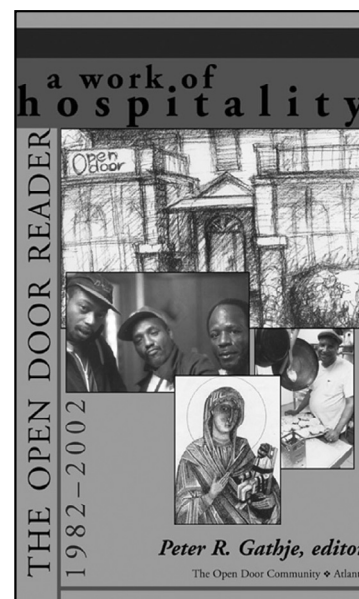
But when we face our hearts of stone, we see again the opportunity for transformation, healing, and conversion. We hope always for the day that our prayers will be answered to turn these hearts of stone into hearts of flesh, and that we receive the gifts of deeper solidarity with those who cannot hide their brokenness and vulnerability.

Now I want to take a minute to identify three issues that I think need some more reflection and thinking together in Catholic Worker circles: leadership, communication, and prayer and Sabbath.

First of all, I think that there is great ambivalence in our movement about leadership, and this is primarily because of Dorothy Day’s and Peter Maurin’s commitment to the philosophy of anarchy. Let me confess right off that this one is really hard for a Presbyterian. But in defense, I would say that what Dorothy and Peter espoused is far from the popular notion of anarchy that might be confused with little more than total chaos. The Personalist philosophers whose ideas were espoused by the early Workers had a theory of decentralization based on personal responsibility. Are people hungry? Then we are not to seek a solution from “Holy Mother State”; we are to ourselves see that they are fed, etc. There is much more to say about this, but that is not my purpose now.

I do think we have some
Community, cont’d on page 10

20TH-ANNIVERSARY ANTHOLOGY NOW AVAILABLE!



A Work of Hospitality: The Open Door Reader, 1982–2002

384 pp., INCLUDES BIBLIOGRAPHY AND INDEX ♦ ISBN 0-9715893-0-5

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Pete Gathje and The Open Door Community have provided us with a treasure, a meditation, a concrete spirituality, a history, and a road map. If you want to learn about hospitality for the homeless and imprisoned, get this book. If you are trying to understand the meaning of “sacrament,” use this book as a primary resource. If you feel somewhat depressed and tired, this book will set fire to your spirit. Theology is in the doing...[In A Work Of Hospitality] we learn about “new beginnings” and then see the development of a community with a solid theology based on the idea that we are all members of one body, one community. We refer to the Open Door Community as the Protestant Catholic Worker. They certainly understand the relationship between hospitality and nonviolent resistance, and A Work of Hospitality portrays this eloquently. I read the book over a course of a month, and found myself re-reading many of the essays. Indeed, they keep me going. And they will keep you going!

-Brendan Walsh
Viva House Baltimore Catholic Worker

Lent, continued from page 1

I've sometimes wondered if my letters back home are just my way of being like the hypocrites in Matthew's Gospel—doing good works so that others will notice.

But this morning, as I listened to that reading, I remembered all the years after I had left a small Catholic elementary school and had started high school in the public system. On Ash Wednesday, I would go to school wearing ashes, and, inevitably, my friends would gently whisper that I had something on my forehead, that I'd gotten into the ink or smudged myself on my homework. And I would feel a shock of embarrassment rush up my neck as I explained that the smudge was from ashes; I'd been to church that morning.

On those days, I resented that reading from Matthew. I'd sit and stand and kneel in the church early in the morning before school and listen to that reading, all the while thinking, "Well, if we aren't supposed to walk around wearing our fasting on our faces, why are we getting this stuff smeared across our foreheads for everybody to look at? Isn't that exactly what Jesus tells us not to do?"

I didn't want to be embarrassed.

What I should have remembered, though, is what the Sisters had taught me about ashes. When we would complain about being embarrassed, they would say, "The ashes are a reminder. Look in the mirror. Don't think about the way you look. Remember why we fast on these days. Remember why we pray. The ashes will fade very quickly, but you should still remember."

And, so this morning, I am remembering all of the folks back home, especially at St. Anne's, especially the musicians and the children and the men and women at daily mass. I am remembering why it is so important to send reports back to you from The Open Door.

Two weeks ago, one of our friends from the streets died. His name was Obie, and he has been on my mind for a long time now.

Back in October, I called the ambulance for him. He was having a heart attack in our front yard, but I didn't know that. In fact, the first time I saw him that day, I thought he was probably on a binge. He was struggling down the sidewalk and could barely walk a straight line. I was going in the opposite direction and stopped to say, "Obie! What's going on? You look a little fuzzy this morning." He didn't make eye contact, just said, "I need to get to The Open Door."

Three hours later, I was on house duty and one of the residents here came in to tell me that Obie was in bad shape. He needed an ambulance.

I went out to talk to him. No odor of liquor. In fact, the people around him told me that Obie didn't really drink, so I called the ambulance and then went out into the yard to sit with him until they came.

The next day we heard that Obie had been having a heart attack; he would have died if I hadn't called the ambulance.

I was feeling pretty good about myself—having mostly forgotten my earlier judgment that he was on a bender and heading down the street to sleep it off in our front yard. After all, I'd saved his life. The doctor said he needed open heart surgery. Just in time, I thought. If we hadn't gotten him in, that would have been the end.

Three days later, Obie was in our yard again, and I was shocked. "Obie!" I called, "I

thought you needed open heart surgery. Why are you here?"

"I have to wait to get an appointment. They don't tell me nothin' there."

For the next several weeks, the nights got colder and wetter. In the evenings when I passed out sandwiches, Obie would be there, still waiting to hear about surgery. He was sleeping in the streets most of that time, in the coldest, wettest, hardest part of the winter. And he needed open heart surgery.

One night when I had to clear the yard, Obie was there bedded down with some others. He needed open heart surgery, and I had to wait while he slowly and with difficulty put his shoes back on and packed up to move on down the street.

I was ashamed of myself.

The doctors told Obie that he needed open heart surgery and sent him out to sleep in the streets.

I knew he needed open heart surgery, and I sent him out to sleep in the streets.

It is good to pray in private, but I believe now that the ashes remind us to act in public.

We live in a country that has some of the best health care in the world, and yet we ask an old man with a life-threatening heart condition to go live in the streets until there's a place in line for him to get the care he needs.

We live in the wealthiest nation in the world, and yet men and women live in the gutters and under highway overpasses. The CEOs of some of our largest, most prosperous companies make salaries large enough to pay dozens of workers a fair wage, and yet we fight for legislation to guarantee everyone a living wage.

I am ashamed of myself that I have to send sick and dying men and women back into the streets after I have handed them a sandwich, and I am ashamed of a system that makes that necessary.

I am quite sure that the ashes I wear this year will again embarrass me, but I'm going to try to remember what the Sisters taught me. The ashes aren't for me; they are a reminder that people live in hardship and that I am both a part of that and must have a hand in changing it. We are all responsible for ourselves and for each other. That is the lesson of the ashes.

Blessings to all of you,
Diana ☩

Circus, continued from page 3

stood there victorious with his arms out, while the audience gaped and then cheered at this burning man. Finally a crew rushed over and extinguished his flames. The audience cheered. The faces of Kenneth Rawls, Ricky Williams and Pat Johnson, three homeless friends, flashed through my mind. Just two months before, in the dark of night, their cathole, their makeshift shelter was set on fire. Kenneth Rawls died in January. Is this what Kenneth looked like that December night staggering out into the cold night air all ablaze? The faces of Iraqi children flashed through my mind, whose homes continue to be bombed in the dark of night. What other bodies light up the night sky while we clap and cheer at the ringmaster's command?

With the final blast, the circus was over. The war parade ended. Little by little the circus was preparing us and our children to disregard violence and not to wince at the crack of the whip. We were being taught to laugh at humiliation, to honor domination, to cheer at the burst of a cannon, to fear death and to love war. I did not anticipate this experience of the circus. I was hoping for a little spectacle, a little acrobatic wonder to brighten a rainy winter day. But maybe clarity is the gift of the wilderness. There is nowhere to hide in the desert. In the wilderness, the powers cannot mask themselves as anything else except who they are: the works of war.

I stumbled from the darkness of the arena into the brightness of the city streets. I wasn't ready to sing Alleluias. But there have been 40 days to wrestle with these visions, 40 days to find clarity, 40 days to remember who I am and who I am called to be, 40 days to drench myself in the works of mercy that shape the daily rhythm of our life. In our living room hangs a poster that names the works of mercy: feed the hungry, clothe the naked, give drink to the thirsty, visit the imprisoned, care for the sick, bury the dead. Where the works of war bring humiliation and death, the works of mercy bring dignity and life. I am thankful for my sojourn at the circus, for it has given me clarity of vision. It has brought me to my knees in prayer, and tightened my grip on Love, on the Way of Christ that leads to Life. It is only this way, through the works of mercy and love that I can now join in singing Alleluia! Alleluia! Christ is Risen! Alleluia! The war parade is no more. Alleluia! ☩

Lauren Cogswell is a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door Community.

¹William Stringfellow, "The Circus" (p.352) in *A Keeper of the Word: Selected Writings of William Stringfellow*, edited by Bill Wylie Kellermann, 1994.

Join us as a Resident Volunteer



DIANA GEORGE

Lauren Cogswell is a Resident Volunteer who spends her days serving the sisters and brothers who come to our door, protesting against war and violence, and praying for a new world. She is a Presbyterian minister who came to us after serving as Associate Pastor of the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Charlottesville, VA.

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homeless, and imprisoned.

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For information and application forms,
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Community, continued from page 8

genuine confusion putting together anarchist philosophy and an understanding of leadership. It's funny really, because Dorothy was a very strong leader, to say the least. (Some say she was a tyrant!) Brian Terrell says that it was often said that Dorothy wanted anarchy so that she could be "the Anarch."

Now, you're not going to hear me make an argument for hierarchy (especially with all its patriarchal connotations), but I do think that we need to acknowledge the role, the place, the need, the blessing of the gifts of leadership. I believe that we in our community have been blessed with an experience of the African American Church that, generally speaking, nurtures and honors its leadership out of an understanding of the meaning and importance of leadership for the oppressed community. This, of course, cannot be approached without clear acknowledgement of the necessity of accountability and transparency in the practice of leadership. We also need to acknowledge and account for the toll of leadership. It is significant, of course, to note that Dorothy entitled her autobiography *The Long Loneliness*.

Second, every community must deal with the struggle to communicate. The more diverse our communities are by race, gender, class, sexual orientation, ethnicity and language, the greater the need is to work on communication. Our daily life should move us toward the discipline of speaking the truth in love: taking the time and finding the balance. Jackie and Ron Spann made several pastoral visits to the Open Door years ago, and they used to stress, "Keep your list short." In other words, don't let the issues build up and fester. When conflict emerges, deal with it and move on together. Easier said than done, of course.

One thing this means is that living together in diversity means probably having a *lot* of meetings. We have to talk together to get past and through the cultural biases, and of course the assumptions we make based on our biological and social "givens" and our life experiences. There is no simple way through it, and it takes time and loving attentiveness. If we seek to understand each other more deeply, we have to keep talking and listening, listening and talking.

The third issue I want to mention is prayer and Sabbath. Again, I raise this simply for the purpose of suggesting that this is an area that we need to consider more together. Many of us attracted to community are "doers," who tend to have a harder time with the contemplative disciplines and the discipline of Sabbath. And work is, as they say, a wonderful place to hide. But without prayer and Sabbath rest, our work becomes shallow and brittle. These are disciplines so crucial for the health of the community and its members that we need to engage each other for nurture and encouragement. Here we find the disciplined rhythm of embracing our responsibility and letting it go.

Just as first world culture offers us few resources for a life of depth or solidarity with the poor and suffering, so it offers few resources for turning to prayer and solitude. Our culture tends to be shallow and immature. In turn, the culture demands shallow and immature people, because these are the ones who make good consumers and uncritically obedient citizens in a society that is increasingly *not* democratic.

But regardless of whether we buy into this

shallow consumerism, all of us have a hard time not living our lives at a frenetic pace. Busyness and the problem of never having enough time seem to plague most people, except those who are condemned to idleness by prison sentences or chronic unemployment (and the resulting maladies that grow from having nothing useful to do need to be addressed as well). I really can't think of many people inside or outside of intentional community who are managing this very well.

But Sabbath rest is not an optional suggestion. It came as a law for our ancient forbears, out of the understanding that rest and worship and prayer are the necessary context to root us in the deepest part of our humanity and the lovingkindness of God. "Come unto me all you who labor and are tired from carrying heavy loads. And I will give you rest."

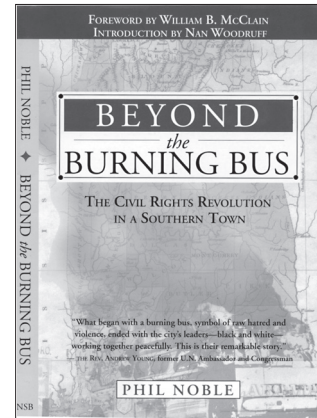
One of our faithful volunteers, Horace Tribble, always says that we need to ask God for an "attitude of gratitude." When our lives are anchored with a spirit of thanksgiving for life and one another, then we are more likely to find our way through the storms.

Finally, all of our disciplines for building community are for the larger purpose of helping us to grow in Christian discipleship: to grow in love and maturity. Every day we must pick up the cross of resistance against the world of war and violence; every day we must choose life and love and nonviolence. When we choose life, the choice is expressed in the love we show to others; and loving others re-memembers Jesus: it makes him present.

To grow in love and maturity is to bring our word and deed together, to love out of the unconditional love of God, which means a particular solidarity with the exploited and insignificant peoples of the world.

And of course we know, because we have been promised, that when we struggle to pour ourselves out among the poor and suffering, we will finally look up and know that Jesus, who comes in the guise of the stranger, was with us all along. ✠

Recommended Reading



Beyond the Burning Bus: The Civil Rights Revolution in a Southern Town.

By Phil Noble.
Montgomery, 2003.
New South Books.

Phil Noble has given us a view of struggle in places like Anniston that are rarely seen and yet are invaluable to understanding the depth and scope of the struggle to apply the moral imperatives of our faith to social, economic, and political challenges.

The Rev. Joseph E. Lowery,
former president,
Southern Christian Leadership Conference

Dear Murphy Davis,

I am a condemned man on Connecticut's death row. I am helping to promote a book drive for our prison library. We really need more books. All kinds are welcome – new or used, hardcover or softcover – but *no* magazines. Please send any donations to:

Mark Suse – Counselor Supervisor
Northern C.I. Library Donations
287 Bilton Road
Somers, CT 06071

If you have any questions, you can call Counselor Supervisor, Mark Suse at (860) 763-8731. Thank you for your help.

May peace be with you,
A friend in prison



Holy Week and Easter with the Homeless

We invite you to join us for worship with our friends on the street during Holy Week.

Palm Sunday	April 4	Open Door Community, 5pm
Monday	April 5	Grady Hospital, Jessie Hill, Jr. Dr, 5pm
Tuesday	April 6	City Jail, Peachtree St. SW, 5pm
Wednesday	April 7	Woodruff Park, Five Points, 5pm
Maundy Thursday	April 8	City Hall, Trinity Avenue, 5pm (with celebration of the Eucharist)
Good Friday	April 9	State Capitol, Washington Street, 5pm
Holy Saturday	April 10	Pine Street Shelter, 5pm Peachtree & Pine Streets

EASTER MORNING Open Door Community, 8 am
Breakfast with our homeless friends, followed by worship and celebration of Life over Death and oppression

Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Diana,

Your Lenten letter [see page 1] was a very powerful one. I hope all who read it will try to do something about the poor and homeless this Lent. I also read your newspaper, *Hospitality*. It is a real eye opener to what is going on in our world today and so many of us don't even know about or don't want to know about.

Have a good Lent. You are on my prayer list. Much success in your work!

Sister Silveria
O'Fallon, MI

Sister Silveria Fricke is a member of the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood. She lives at the Mother House in O'Fallon, Missouri. She was Diana George's first grade teacher at St. Anthony's Elementary School in High Ridge, Missouri.

Ed,

Just read your latest "fiery" *Hospitality* issue. I swear, instead of following the laws of entropy (which all creation follows: the wearing down of energy), you are moving in the opposite direction. The more prophetic energy you release, the higher the next BLAST is. Not even Einstein can follow what Spirit-thermo-dynamic system you are operating with. BUT WE DO!!!! It's called THE HOLY AND DIVINE SPIRIT, breathing through a vessel of clay, named Ed Loring.

Father Tom Francis
Monastery of the Holy Spirit
Conyers, GA

Dear Ed,

I just finished teaching a class tonight on the Life of Jesus. The responses of the students were amazing. We made many comparisons between the life of Jesus and the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. And we strongly emphasized the need to discover Jesus in the poor today. The students embraced this radical vision of Jesus with enthusiasm, adding their own insightful perspectives to a very rich discussion.

And, as always, that brings me back to being thankful to you and Murphy and everyone who is a part of the witness of the Open Door. My ability to learn Jesus in this way and to share with others who are learning Jesus would be impossible without what you all do for me and so many others.

I have many fine books of liberation theology and biblical studies, all of which have enriched me and shaped me. But all of that would be empty head-knowledge without the incarnated witness of the Open Door.

Jesus can only be learned in part in books, in part in classrooms, in part in sanctuaries—in part in the pages of the Scriptures. The Jesus we follow is still on the streets, still keeping company with "those people," still questioning our values and lifestyles. The place of discipleship is the streets. Only there can we follow him fully. And there he calls us.

Thank you for making space for Jesus in this city.

May God continue to bless you with the only blessings that truly count—the beatitudes of the radical Jesus.

Always with you,
Chad
Decatur, GA

Chad Hyatt is an Associate Pastor at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Decatur, GA, and a regular volunteer at the Open Door.



RITA CORBIN

Dear Open Door:

I was fascinated by the recent article on William Sheppard.

Can Diana George, or someone, tell me if the three sources she mentioned are available locally?

Keep up the good work!
Warmly,
Bill Crosland
Central Presbyterian Church
Atlanta, GA

Diana responds: Adam Hochschild's King Leopold's Ghost is available in paperback at bookstores. It's a good read and a great place to start.

Dear Murphy,

....I am hoping that this year's legislative session will find some bills being passed that are beneficial to prisoners, as something needs to change. The prisons are overcrowded. Here at [my prison] they have (once again) turned the TV rooms into dormitories. Also, because of the budgetary problems a lot of services have been cut back.

In prison, when government cuts the budget, it results in a number of changes. For the most part, medical services are reduced and counseling services are scaled back. The result is those needing treatment for an assortment of maladies find themselves untreated.

Warmly,
A friend in prison

Dear Editor:

I am a Protestant pastor. Here are the five reasons I will not be going to see the Mel Gibson film, "The Passion of Christ."

1. I read the book and movies are seldom as good as the book.
2. I've seen many an Anglo portray Jesus so I'll wait until a Middle Eastern Jew is cast in his part.
3. I already know that the Romans brutally executed Jesus. Two hours of graphic, gratuitous violence is something I try to avoid in films.
4. My theology is not grounded in Jesus' suffering and crucifixion but rather in his ministry and resurrection. I don't want Hollywood images planted in my brain to hold my spirituality hostage.
5. I don't need to contribute my \$9 to Mel Gibson in what is clearly a highly commercial venture.

So I'll take a pass this time.

Rev. Dr. Marie M. Fortune
Founder/Senior Analyst, FaithTrust Institute
Seattle, Washington

Marie, a friend of the Open Door Community, sent this letter to the editor of her local paper.

Dear Ms. George,

I was pleased to read your article in *Hospitality* about Dr. William Sheppard ("William Sheppard, 1865-1927: Missionary, Explorer, Human Rights Activist," *Hospitality*, January 2004, vol. 23, no. 1). My parents were missionaries in Congo from 1912 to 1947. I was born in Congo and returned as a missionary myself from 1948 until 1986.

It is unfortunate that, except for a few years in the early 1900s, little was known or recorded about this remarkable man. Henry Stanley became well known because he was a reporter and prolific writer and was able to toot his own horn. Dr. Sheppard, like many other pioneer missionaries, did not write much for publication or see publicity outside of church circles.

Dr. Sheppard was honored in his lifetime: he was the first man of African descent to address and become a member of the Royal Geographic Society of Great Britain, he addressed the U.S. Congress, and he was decorated later by the Belgian government for his work and investigations in Congo. Dr. Sheppard was honored and esteemed by his fellow missionaries and Africans alike.

As you mentioned, there are beginning to appear, in recent years, a number of books and articles about him.

May I comment about one sentence in your article: "For his troubles, Sheppard was sued, defamed, and dismissed from his position in Congo."

For their troubles, Sheppard and Morrison were sued by those responsible for the atrocities, but were entirely acquitted by the Congo Free State court.

Dr. Sheppard's departure from the Congo Mission did not come from his human rights activism. His acknowledged earlier improprieties with several African women compromised his work and witness as a missionary. He returned to the U.S. and, like the man that he was, confessed before the church court and accepted the discipline imposed. He was later restored to the ministry and served as pastor of a church in Louisville, Kentucky, until his death. (There was a similar case a few years before involving a white missionary by the name of Verner. He too had been recalled.)

During Dr. Sheppard's years in Louisville, many of his missionary colleagues and friends stopped by to visit him. I remember the time I (age 6) was with my parents in his home shortly before his death in 1927.

Let me thank you again for the article you wrote, reminding us of the life and work of William Sheppard.

Sincerely,
Bill Washburn
Chamblee, GA

Diana responds below:

Dear Mr. Washburn,

Thank you so much for your recollections of William Sheppard. Your letter is a welcome addition to our little piece on Sheppard's life. According to biographer Pagan Kennedy, after Sheppard left the Congo, the Foreign Missions board began actively discouraging African American missionaries to Africa. As you remind us, Sheppard was well-known at the time, but, as Kennedy writes, "Sheppard's fame would fade almost as quickly as the sprays of camellias that perfumed the air beside his grave. It was an era when history books only recorded the doings of white men, when mainstream newspapers ignored or reviled people of color, when black American culture happened in the margins and on the sidelines. And so Sheppard fell into obscurity. Aside from manuscripts published by the Presbyterian Church, he did not begin to appear in history books until the 1960s."

It is a pleasure to have heard from someone who actually met William Sheppard and carries that memory with him and to all of us.

Diana George

Open Door Community Ministries

Soup Kitchen: Wednesday and Thursday, 11 a.m. – noon.

Weekday Breakfast: Monday and Tuesday, 6:45 a.m.

Showers: Wednesday and Thursday, 8 a.m.

Use of Phone: Monday – Tuesday, 6:45 a.m. – 7:45 a.m.,
Wednesday – Thursday, 9 a.m. – noon.

Harriet Tubman Free Medical Clinic and

Soul Foot Care Clinic: Thursdays, 7:00 p.m.

Clarification Meetings: Tuesdays, 7:30 – 9 p.m.

Weekend Retreats: Four times each year (for our household,
volunteers and supporters).

Prison Ministry: Monthly trip to prisons in Hardwick, GA,
in partnership with First Presbyterian Church of Milledgeville;
The Jackson (Death Row) Trip; Pastoral visits in various jails
and prisons

We are open...

Monday through Saturday: We answer telephones from 9:00
a.m. until noon, and from 2:00 until 6:00 p.m. The building is open from
9:00 a.m. until 8:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday for donations. (We
do not answer phone and door during our noon prayers and lunch
break from 12:30 until 2:00.) Please call in advance if you need to
arrange to come at other times.

**On Sunday we invite you to worship with us at 5 p.m. and join us,
following worship, for a delicious supper.**

*Our Hospitality Ministries also include visitation and letter writing to
prisoners, anti-death penalty advocacy, advocacy for the homeless,
daily worship and weekly Eucharist.*

Join Us in Worship!

We gather for worship and Eucharist at 5 p.m. each Sunday, followed by supper together.
Our worship space is limited, so if you are considering bringing a group to worship,
please contact us at 404-246-7621.

April 4 Palm Sunday Worship at 910

April 11 Easter Breakfast and Worship
in the front yard at 8 a.m.
No evening Worship

April 18 Eucharist at 910

April 23-25 Spring Retreat at Dayspring Farm
No Worship at 910

*Plan now to join us on the
streets for our annual Holy
Week with the Homeless, April
4-10, and for Easter Breakfast
and Worship, 8:00 a.m. on
Sunday, April 11.*

See details on page 10.

Please check
www.opendoorcommunity.org
or call us for the most up-to-
date worship schedule.

Clarification Meetings at the Open Door

We will meet for clarification on
selected Tuesday evenings
in April from 7:30-9 pm.

*Plan to join us for
discussion and reflection!*



DANIEL NICHOLS

For the latest information and
scheduled topics, please call
404-874-9652 or see
www.opendoorcommunity.org.

Medicine Needs List

(for our Thursday Evening
Harriet Tubman Free Medical Clinic
and Soul Foot Care Clinic)

**We are also looking
for volunteers
to help staff our
Soul Foot Care Clinic!**

ibuprofen
lubriderm lotion
COUGH DROPS
non-drowsy allergy tablets
COUGH MEDICINE (alcohol free)

epsom salt
anti-bacterial soap
shoe inserts
corn removal pads
exfoliation cream (e.g. apricot scrub)
pumice stones
foot spa
cuticle clippers
latex gloves
nail files (large)
toenail clippers (large)
medicated foot powder
antifungal cream (Tolfanate)

Needs of the Community

JEANS	hams and turkeys for our Soup Kitchen	disposable razors
men's work shirts	sandwiches	deodorant
underwear for men	quick grits	vaseline
women's underwear	cheese	combs
men's belts	coffee	toothbrushes
socks	multi-vitamins	lip balm
men's shoes (all sizes)	MARTA tokens	SOAP (any size)
EYEGLASSES	postage stamps	SHAMPOO (travel size)
BLANKETS	MINIVAN IN GOOD RUNNING CONDITION	alarm clocks
WALKING SHOES (9 ½ and up)	two mountain bikes for Dayspring Farm	REFRIGERATOR
LARGE and X-LARGE T-SHIRTS		

From 11am 'til 1:30pm, Wednesday and Thursday, our attention is focused on serving the soup kitchen and household lunch. As much as we appreciate your coming, this is a difficult time for us to receive donations. When you can come before 11 or after 1:30, it would be helpful. THANK YOU!